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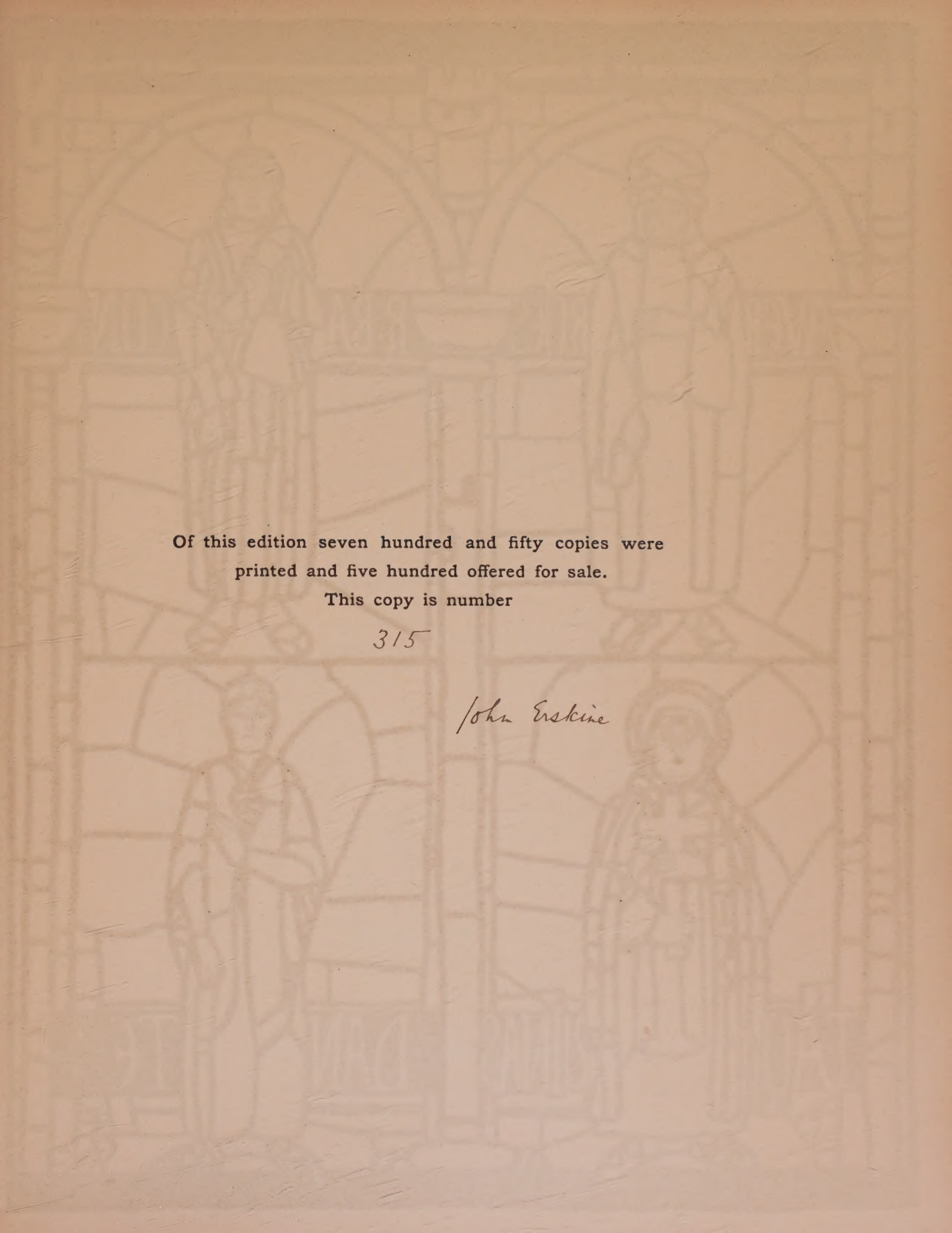

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John Erskine

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A PAGEANT OF THE THIRTEENTH CENTURY

FOR THE

SEVEN HUNDREDTH ANNIVERSARY

OF

ROGER BACON

GIVEN BY COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY

THE PLAN AND THE NOTES BY
JOHN J. COSS
OF THE DEPARTMENT OF PHILOSOPHY

THE TEXT BY
JOHN ERSKINE
OF THE DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH AND COMPARATIVE LITERATURE

THE ILLUSTRATIONS BY
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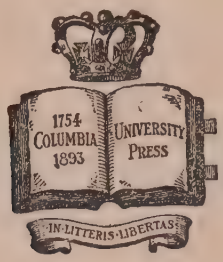

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Preface

THIS Spring, when Columbia University was considering some way to keep the seven hundredth year of Roger Bacon's birth, Mr. John J. Coss, of the Department of Philosophy, proposed that all branches of the University should collaborate in a pageant, to exhibit Bacon's life and his significance, and to illustrate the age in which he lived. The educative value of such an entertainment and the inspiration of such a collaborating between scholars in various fields recommended the plan at once.

Mr. Coss also suggested the preliminary scenario of the pageant, as well as the original idea. Though modified by discussions in committee and changed here and there in the process of composition, this scenario has in general been followed, and the chief credit for the pageant, therefore, belongs to Mr. Coss. For the text based upon his plan, I am responsible; but he has assisted me with his scholarship, with his suggestions, and with his criticisms, and he has be-

sides planned for the staging of the pageant in every detail.

Months of research would not have been too much to spend in preparing these scenes. But since our time was short, we determined to honor Bacon with what scholarship we might have in hand, rather than with a forced show of erudition. We have, therefore, framed these episodes upon well-known and obvious sources, and the kindness of several colleagues who have read and approved our manuscript leads us to hope we have made no serious blunders.

The wish that the pageant might be a collaboration has been happily fulfilled. We lack space to acknowledge all the generous aid we have had from every part of the University. But the pageant would not have been possible, had it not been for certain tireless workers, who bore the brunt. Mr. Walter Henry Hall, of the department of Music, has selected and arranged the incidental music. Mr. Claggett Wilson, of the department of Fine Arts, Teachers College, has designed all the costumes and prepared the illustrations for this book. Mr. La Mont A. Warner, assisted by Mr. Robert Gray, of the department of Interior Decoration, Teachers College, has made posters, banners, and stage plans. Miss Jane Fales, Professor of the

History of Costume, Teachers College, has directed the making of the costumes. Mr. E. R. Smith, of the Avery Library, has put at the disposal of the pageant workers his wide acquaintance with books on costume and design. Miss Caroline Fleming, of the department of Philosophy, has very kindly read the proofs of this book. To all of these and to the friends too many to name, I offer my personal thanks.

JOHN ERSKINE

Columbia University
September 1, 1914

The picture of the thirteenth century does not begin until Part II. Part I is introductory and represents the earlier cultural elements to which the thirteenth century was in large measure indebted for the character of its life and learning.

Averroës (1126–1198), the greatest of the Moorish philosophers, is chosen as the central figure of this part of the pageant because the summary of Greek learning found in his many works gained ready entrance into Christendom in the course of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries. More than any other man he brought to the Christian nations an understanding of Aristotle and of science.

THE CULTURE OF THE THIRTEENTH CENTURY

A PAGEANT OF MEDIÆVAL LIFE

PART I

PROLOGUE

(Averroës enters, and slowly crossing the stage, stops with surprise at sight of the audience. He walks towards them and speaks)

AVERROËS

Who are ye? For what purpose are ye come?
Idling your hour away, with curious eyes
To take your fill of shadows? Or in heart
To watch with me the old and patient stars
Still in their silent motions unperturbed—
Whether we read their influence or are blind—
Marching forever with the eternal mind?

I am Averroês, a lonely name.

Though from afar I carried first the lamp
That lights your world, though from his fading heaven
I brought down mighty Aristotle, the star
Brightest that in the thought of Allah flamed,
Yet I arrive, a name ye hardly know,
Unreal, unwelcome. True and shining things
Are ghosts, till love the blood of welcome brings.

But the Arabian believer would not own
Kinship with me; my hand too fearless loosed
The tangled mysteries of soul and brain.
What by the eye is seen, by finger touched,
Or only by the still heart subtly felt,—
What can be known, all that on reason waits
To measure and explore, I wrenched away
From vagueness and gave wholly to the brain.
Though in the placid hands of faith remained
Infinity of hopes and far desires,
My people feared me, lest a greater pride
Than Shaitân's Allah's kingdom would divide.

Nor would the Christians have me, though I built
Solid the floor whereon their mount of faith
Still lifts. I gave the Church another mind;
From me they drew fresh weapons and new dreams.
Yet in their eyes a pagan, they put by
Their armourer unthanked, nor learned from me
More of this world than helped them to the next,
Nor touched the pearls of truth that strew the earth,
But in the sea of fathomless perhaps
Would dive and come up poor. Would not the wise,
Heart after heart, render to Allah praise
For certain good? for knowledge most of all?

Patience is the reward of them that serve.
Patiently the forgotten, from their place
Watch the clear stars of truth ride unperturbed,

And watching, feed on comfort. Now I see
The elder prophets of the times I served,
Moments of day still circling through the night,
Fountains of faith and citadels of law,
Light-bringers all, scholar and saint and king.
Watch while they pass in their bright wandering.

(He has moved to the side of the stage, and now raises his arms to greet the vision)

In the culture of the Middle Ages there was no element so powerful as the Church. Intellectually, morally, and politically her influence dominated the European peoples for centuries.

This scene represents in procession the important figures in the ecclesiastical tradition, and especially calls attention to the four Doctors of the Latin Church.

The following Greek and Latin Fathers appear in this scene:

St. Ignatius (d. c. 115)
St. Polycarp (d. c. 155)
St. Justin Martyr (d. c. 163)
St. Irenaeus (d. c. 202)
Tertullian (c. 150–c. 220)
Clement of Alexandria (c. 150–c. 220)
Origen (186–253)
St. Cyprian of Carthage (d. 258)
Eusebius of Caesarea (c. 264–c. 340)
St. Cyril of Jerusalem (c. 315–c. 386)
St. Athanasius (c. 296–c. 373)
St. Basil of Cappadocia (329–379)
St. Gregory of Nazianzen (c. 325–c. 395)
St. Gregory of Nyssa (c. 335–c. 400)
St. John Chrysostom (347–407)
St. Hilary of Poitiers (d. 368)
St. Ambrose (d. 397)
St. Jerome (c. 340–420)
St. Augustine (354–430)
Theodoret (390–457)
Socrates of Constantinople (d. 440)
Sozomen (c. 400–c. 450)
St. Leo (d. 461)
St. Gregory the Great (d. 604)
St. Isidore of Seville (d. 636)
The Venerable Bede (d. 735)
St. John of Damascus (d. c. 754)

SCENE I

PROCESSION OF THE CHURCH FATHERS

AVERROËS

I see the ancient Fathers, the Church makers.

(Voices off the stage are heard chanting the Magnificat in a Gregorian mode. The Church Fathers enter in slow procession. They halt and face the audience, as the four chief Doctors in turn reach the center of the stage, step forward and speak. When the voices sing, the procession slowly moves again)

VOICES

My soul doth magnify the Lord, and my spirit hath rejoiced in God my Saviour.

For he hath regarded the lowliness of his handmaiden.

For behold, from henceforth all generations shall call me blessed.

ST. AMBROSE

I am Ambrose, to all pagans enemy.
When of the Arians God smote the heresy,
I was His rod.

VOICES

For he that is mighty hath magnified me, and holy is his Name.

And his mercy is on them that fear him throughout all generations.

ST. AUGUSTINE

I am Augustine, once unbelieving.
In Holy Church I found for all men's saving
The City of God.

VOICES

He hath shewed strength with his arm, he hath scattered the proud in the imagination of their hearts.

He hath put down the mighty from their seat, and hath exalted the humble and meek.

ST. JEROME

I am Jerome, the hermit, a glad instrument
Whereby God made to spread His testaments,
Comfort to bring.

VOICES

He hath filled the hungry with good things, and the rich he hath sent empty away.

He remembering his mercy hath holpen his servant Israel, as he promised to our forefathers, Abraham and his seed, for ever.

ST. GREGORY

I am Gregory, who enlarged the Church's power.
I set the ancient ceremony in order.
I taught faith to sing.

(Exeunt)

VOICES

Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost;

As it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be, world without end. Amen.

The Black and White Byzantine Ballet

This scene celebrates the codification of the Roman law by the Byzantine scholars in December 533. Through the use of older codes, the exclusion of contradictory and antiquated decisions, and the introduction of recent enactments, commissions appointed by Justinian prepared a series of legal works which bore his name and which profoundly influenced the western world from the twelfth century.

The speeches in this scene are adapted from the commissions and from the constitutions of the "Digest" and from a poem by Paulus Silentiarius written for another occasion.

JUSTINIAN (483–565): *Roman Emperor at Constantinople, re-conqueror of Italy and northern Africa, builder of public works and churches, including St. Sophia, ardent churchman, patron of letters, codifier of laws.*

THEODORA (c508–548): *Actress, dancer, able and ambitious wife of Justinian.*

TRIBONIAN (c490–c547): *Jurist, minister, member of the commission of ten which prepared the Code, President of the Digest-Commission of sixteen, President of the Institutes-Commission of three.*

THEOPHILUS: *Professor of Law at the University of Constantinople, member of the Institutes-Commission.*

DOROTHEUS: *Professor of Law at the Law School at Beyrout, member of the Institutes-Commission.*

EPIPHANIOS: *Patriarch of Constantinople 530–536.*

PAUL SILENTIARIUS: *Chamberlain, senator, and poet.*

JOHN OF ASIA (c505–c585): *Historian.*

JOHN THE CAPPADOCIAN: *Praetorian Prefect.*

ANTHEMIUS OF TRALLES; ISIDORUS OF MILETUS; IGNATIUS: *Architects of St. Sophia.*

Body-guard, ladies of the court, priests, jurists, Persian officials.

SCENE II

JUSTINIAN AND THE CODIFIERS OF THE ROMAN LAW

AVERROËS

I see Justinian, who revised the law.

(Enter the court, and after them Justinian and Theodora, who mount their thrones. Paulus Silentiarius addresses them with a poem)

PAULUS SILENTIARIUS

Emperor Caesar Flavius Justinianus,
Pious and happy,
Renowned conqueror and triumpher, ever august,
Greatness of mind, intelligence, and faith
In thee we admire. May God destroy in wrath
Them that admire thee not! who dost bestow
Kindness on kin and stranger, friend and foe.
Thee we admire and her who shares thy state,
The Empress Theodora, good and great,
Fortunate and all virtuous, fair and wise.
No danger hurt thee! Thy defences stand
Less in thy spears and shields than in God's hand.
Christ is thy counsellor; no enterprise—
Law-giving, nor planting of cities east and west,
Building of churches, waging of wars, nor, best,
Ceasing from battles—without Him begins;
His arm with thine, not thine alone, the victory wins.
Now to thy wonders add this miracle—
Teach us fit words wherein thy deeds to tell,
If thy vast worth shall otherwise be seen
Than in our love for thee and for thy Queen.

JUSTINIAN

Paulus Silentiarius, Chamberlain,
Senator: thou hast spoken like a poet—
A good man, yet a poet. We do indeed
Govern by the authority of God,
In His name waging war, advancing peace,
And, by His strength vouchsafed, building the state.
First of His aids on earth we count the law.
Therefore, because our statutes, handed down
From ancient Romulus who founded Rome,
Were sore confused, spreading interminably
Beyond the reach of patience even to read,
Our will was to amend and make them clear,
And into one book gather them all. We chose
For this hard task a most distinguished man,
Tribonianus, master of the offices,
Ex-quaestor of our sacred palace, ex-consul;
We chose Theophilus and Dorotheus,
Illustrious and most eloquent professors,
With other brilliant and hardworking men.
Now, conscript Fathers, and all men in the world,
Hear the new law Tribonian gives to Rome.

TRIBONIAN

Emperor Caesar Flavius Justinianus, we lay before thee the Roman law, from the founding of the city to the days of thy rule, one thousand and four hundred years, now brought into one harmony, without repeating or contradiction, with no two rules for any question. We have corrected what in the old books was misplaced or superfluous or unfinished, and what is obsolete we have left out. That the writings in this book may never beget ambiguity, we have used no trickery of speech nor compendious conundrums. Yet we have so honored the ancient authorities that we have here mentioned the names of all who were learned in the law; from thirty-nine of them have we quoted, and we have read two thousand treatises. All this we have concluded in five years, though we had not expected to finish it in ten.

We have set forth one system of law for all men. For justice is the constant purpose which gives to every man his due, and the knowledge of law should be the knowledge

of the just and of the unjust. The laws here ordered teach us to live honestly, to injure no one, to render each man what is his. To thee we offer them, and to Almighty God, and to Him we give thanks, Who doth vouchsafe to thee successful waging of war, the enjoyment of honorable peace, and the giving of the best laws, not only for our own age, but for all time.

JUSTINIAN

Conscript Fathers, and all men in all lands,
Now render God your praises, Who would keep
Works of enduring benefit for our hands.
Revere these laws, and let the old ones sleep.

(The Court dancers appear)

(Exeunt)

The previous scenes have shown the continuation of the Greek and Roman tradition. This episode brings before us the Germanic peoples, forerunners of the modern nations. Charles the Great is here portrayed as a friend of learning, the patron of the schools which were to educate the barbarians in the heritage of the past and so prepare for the culture of the thirteenth century. The date of the scene is about 787. The speeches are adapted from a capitulary of Charles on education, from the biography by Einhard, and from the dialogue between Pippin and Alcuin quoted by Guizot.

CHARLES THE GREAT (742–814): *King of the Franks, Roman Emperor from 800.*

HILDEGARD (759–783): *Wife of Charles.*

PIPPIN THE HUNCHBACK; CHARLES (772–811); PIPPIN, *King of Italy* (777–810); LOUIS THE PIOUS (778–840); HROTRUD, *a daughter* (772–810): *Children of Charles.*

ALCUIN (735–804): *A Northumbrian, student at York, master of the Palace School* (782–796), *Abbot of St. Martin in Tours.*

Scholars of the Court and School: PETER OF PISA, *grammarian;* PAUL THE DEACON, *a Lombard historian;* ARNO, *Bishop of Salzburg, Archbishop of Orleans;* PAUL, *Patriarch of Aquilei;* CLEMENT THE SCOT; EINHARD, *the biographer of Charles the Great;* THEODOLF, *the Spanish poet;* ANGILBERT, *son-in-law of Charles and father of Nithard the historian.*

Soldiers, ladies of the court.

SCENE III

CHARLES THE GREAT AND ALCUIN

AVERROËS

King Charles the Great, who warred against the Moors,
Yet welcomed learning for his people's sake.

(Enter the court, and last of all Charles the Great, who mounts his throne)

CHARLES THE GREAT

Paul the Deacon, read them the order.

PAUL THE DEACON

Charles, by the Grace of God King of the Franks and of the Lombards, and Patrician of the Romans, to all the faithful:

We command that the bishoprics and monasteries, committed by Christ's favor to our charge, shall be given not only to a regular and holy way of life, but also to the study of letters; and that all men everywhere shall teach and learn as they are able and as Heaven permits. For as by obedience come good morals, so by study come good sentences; and they who would please God in anything may as well begin with their speech. A good deed, doubtless, is better than a just word, but a man must know what is right before he can do it. Therefore, let him who has good intentions learn to say what he means. For if he lack skill to speak or write, how shall he understand the Scriptures? And if he mistake the word, how shall he grasp the doctrine? Apply yourselves, therefore, to the study of letters, and let those who know instruct those who will learn.

Ye know me, a strong fighter, not a clerk;
Easier fifty Saracens than a book.
Yet it behooves no man to leave unread
What God has written by the pen of saints,
And with His own hand written in the stars.
I know the stars, and somewhat I can count.
Nightly I trace and trace my tablets over,
So with hard study sometime I shall write—
Shall I not, Alcuin? I began too old,
Perchance, but do ye now begin, younger
And wiser. Alcuin, master of my school,
Will teach us all. Where is that son of mine?
Question the master! Let us hear good words
Well handled, and truth sprouting out of them.
Begin!

PIPPIN

What is winter?

ALCUIN

The exile of spring.

PIPPIN

What is spring?

ALCUIN

The painter of the earth.

PIPPIN

What is summer?

ALCUIN

The power which clothes the earth, and ripens fruit.

PIPPIN

What is autumn?

ALCUIN

The granary of the year.

PIPPIN

What is the year?

ALCUIN

The chariot of the world.

PIPPIN

What is life?

ALCUIN

Happiness for the happy, misery for the miserable, the expectation of death.

PIPPIN

What is death?

ALCUIN

An inevitable event, a doubtful journey, a subject of tears for the living, the confirmation of wills, the robber of men.

CHARLES THE GREAT

Good!

PIPPIN

What is the earth?

ALCUIN

The mother of all that grows, the nurse of all that exists, the granary of life, the gulf that swallows up all things.

PIPPIN

What is faith?

ALCUIN

The assurance of unknown and marvelous things.

PIPPIN

What is marvelous?

ALCUIN

I saw the other day a man standing, a dead man walking, a man walking who had never breathed.

PIPPIN

What is it?

ALCUIN

An image in the water.

PIPPIN

Of course! I've seen that.

ALCUIN

Now I will question you. One who is unknown to me has talked with me, having no tongue and no voice; he never was, he never will be, I never heard him, I never knew him. *(A pause)* What do I mean?

PIPPIN

Was it a dream, master?

ALCUIN

It was. I will question you again. What is that, which at the same time is and is not?

PIPPIN

Nothing.

CHARLES THE GREAT

Enough. Well done. Ye see how knowledge comes. Study to fill your heads with speech like this.

(Exeunt)

The Chief Figures of the Caliph's Court

This scene in the Golden Age of the Caliphate represents Al Ma'mûn, greatest of Abbasid Caliphs, at the height of his power. It calls attention to the worldly dominion and to the culture of the Eastern peoples,—of the Semitic Arabs, and more particularly of the Iranian Persians, who, though not the princes, were the real power in the intellectual life of the Caliphate in Baghdad. Poets, translators, and scientists of Persian race, and now and then an Arabian and Christian scholar, studied and wrote in Baghdad from the eighth to the twelfth centuries; and through their writings and those of the Moors and Jews of Spain the peoples of the West received in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries a knowledge of the ancient philosophers and of the scientific discoveries of the past.

The time of the scene is about 830. The speeches are based on various histories of Baghdad and the Arabs.

Al Ma'mûn (786-833): *Caliph 813-833.*

Hasan Ibn Sahl: *A Persian Visir of Ma'mûn.*

Tâhir, The Ambidexter: *General of Ma'mûn, Governor of Khurasan from 820.*

Ishâq ibn Ibrahîm al Mausili: *A Persian singer and poet, companion of Ma'mûn.* Ya 'qûb ibn Ishâq al Kindi (d. 864): *An Arab physician, scientist, philosopher.* Ibn Qutaiba (d. 828): *An Arab historian and literary critic.* Abû Zaid Hunain ibn Ishâq, of Hira (c. 809–873): *A Christian Arab, physician, greatest of all translators of the Classics.* Abu-'l Atâhia (d. 828): *A poet.* Ibn Sa'd (d. 845): *Secretary to Al-Wâqidi, historian of Muslim conquests.* Sahl ibn Hârûn: *Private secretary of Ma'mûn, an orthodox Muslim, director of the "House of Wisdom."* Muhammed; Ahmad; Hasan Yahya ibn Abi Mansûr: *Members of the "House of Wisdom" ("Treasure of Wisdom").*

Physicians, warriors, representatives from the Turks of Central Asia, from a King of India, from the Chinese, the Egyptians, and the Byzantines.

SCENE IV

THE CALIPH OF BAGHDAD AND THE HOUSE OF WISDOM

AVERROËS

I see that Caliph, the wisdom lover,
Who honored the supreme philosopher.

(Enter the court and the scholars, and last the Caliph, who mounts his throne. The Grand Vizir Hasan speaks)

HASAN

Vicegerent of God, Sultan of God on earth,
Behold thy House of Wisdom at thy feet!
They, gathered from all places in the world,
With bloom of knowledge make thy palace sweet—
What heals the sick, what metals turn to gold,
And whither sails through heaven the starry fleet.
Speak to them, Shadow of God! As once to thee
The vision entered, marvelous and true—
Great Aristotle, thronéd in a dream—
And the divine truth-hunger on thee grew,
Prince of the Faithful, now our vision be,
Look on us, and our love of truth renew.

THE CALIPH MA'MÛN

Translators of the ancients, of Aristotle,
Plato, Plotinus, Galen, Hippocrates,
Learnéd and practised in the craft of healing,
Light of my days! In you the city lives,
Baghdad, of old by charméd rivers set,
After the shock of war rebuilt more fair
Than when my joyous father, great Hârûn,
Delighted in its streets, a king disguised.
Hither the boats of the Euphrates come,

Long caravans from Egypt through the plains,
Hither the wares of China overseas,
And bales from Mosul down the Tigris borne,
Good fortune marches on us by all paths,
But Time, alas, marches with swifter feet!
Life is a splendid robe, patterned too short,
Our poets sing. Only the mind endures,
And with that wealth ye make my city great.
Yea, all its treasure of enchanted lanes
And palace-roofs agleam, is to the wise
Only a setting for more precious thought—
A shrine for thee, Al Kindi, sage and good.
Thou on a dead philosophy didst breathe,
Thou art its life. When the old cunning failed
Of medicine, thou didst restore the art.
Happiness find thee here, and length of days!

AL KINDI

Sultan of God and comrade of the wise,
I and my fellows glean from ancient minds
Knowledge for thee in whom all knowledge dwells.
I lay the art of healing in thy hand,
Old as the world, but never till Al Kindi
Has one been master of it. How to cure,
Some say, only tradition tells, and some
Hold that by trial only comes the skill;
But by the inward principles of things
The true physician works unerringly.
Familiar with the harmony of drugs
As the lute-player with the strings in tune,
We know what properties of saving herbs
Match with the ills of body or of blood;
Out of disease we pluck untroubled health,
Life out of death. We serve thee, O Ma'mûn,
And all thy tribe. Enjoy thy heart's desire!
Long may thy House of Wisdom light the land.

THE CALIPH MA'MÛN

Allah, that blesses all, increase the light.

(The court dancers appear)

(Exeunt)

EPILOGUE

(When the stage is cleared, Averroës remains standing with bowed head. His two sons enter. The elder speaks)

SON

Father, thy time is past; thou wanderest too;
Thou art with the forgotten stars.

AVERROËS

My sons,
Who would not wait beyond his hour, to watch
The happier dawns and wiser hours to be?
I, whom the faithful feared, this faith do hold—
Truth within truth, Time's cycles shall unfold.

(Exeunt)

In the second part of the pageant the social and industrial life of the thirteenth century is presented, and Roger Bacon appears in all the scenes.

Of Bacon's life we know little. Even the dates of his birth and death, 1214 and 1294, are approximate. His earlier years, perhaps until 1234, were spent in Oxford, where he heard lectures. Like most theologians of his time he went to Paris for his Doctorate. Shortly after taking his degree, certainly not before 1245, he joined the Franciscan order of friars. About 1250 he returned to Oxford, from whence in 1257 Bonaventura, at that time head of his Order, called him to Paris. How he was treated there we do not know. Tradition represents him as imprisoned. At worst, he may have suffered some restriction of his teaching. In 1267 he was asked by Pope Clement IV. to submit the results of his labors. Within a year he wrote the "Opus Majus," its supplement, the "Opus Minus," and its introduction, the "Opus Tertium."

How his works were received we do not know. To-day we see in them much that conforms to Scholastic tradition, much that is false or of no consequence when judged by our own standards, much that was novel to his age, yet not championed by him alone. At the same time, in the pages which he has left there breathes a spirit critical of the life and learning of his times, eager to discover the causes of human error and to correct them by detailed investigation. He was impatient of ignorance and pedantry, and he was indiscriminate in his criticism.

A single reference, and that not altogether above suspicion, tells us that Bacon was imprisoned in 1278. His theology, or his difficult temper, rather than his scientific teaching, probably should be viewed as the cause of his trouble. By 1292 he was writing and teaching again. He died in Oxford and was buried there in 1294.

PART II

PROLOGUE

ROGER BACON

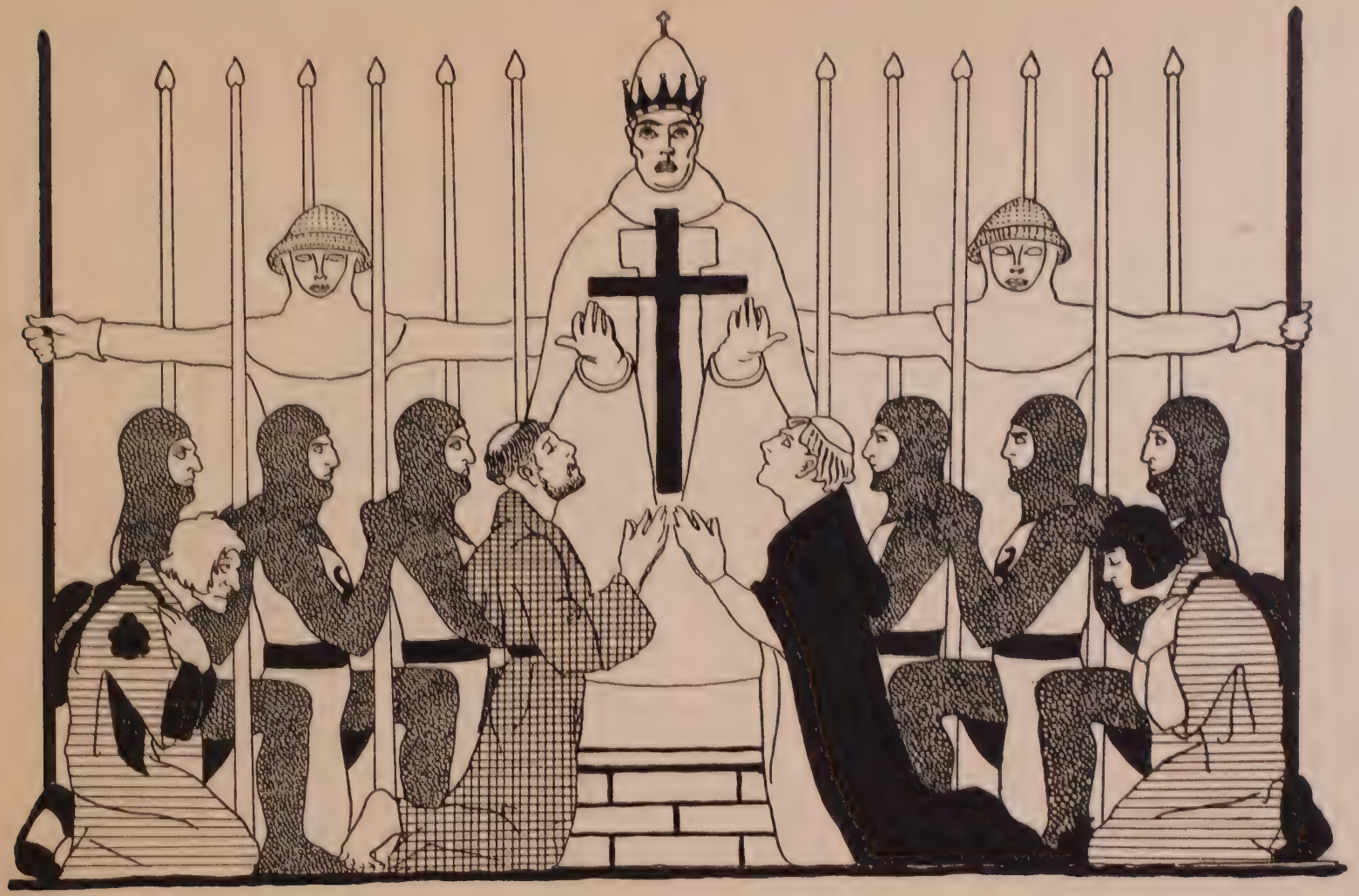
Ye who on perished time complacent look
And count them fortunate, though born too soon,
Who had your thoughts, your knowledge, and your dreams,
Tasting the feast ere the full board was spread—
Know that those pioneers, the path-breakers,
With pity look toward you, who break no path,
But down the track of custom take your way.
Wrapped in a seed of quaintness do ye find
Promise of your perfections, and in me
A first crude sample of the modern man?
I, Roger Bacon, bid you contemplate
The brave outreaching spirit of my days,
Whereof ye are the pallid consequence
And shadowy conceit. The idle flower
Too long insults with praise the rooted tree
For coming first. They only who begin,
Who break the shell of precedent, and earn
Integrity of knowledge for reward,
Come when they will, they are the modern men.

They must companion oft with echo-makers,
Tradition-keepers, the timid, cautious ones,
Superfluous and inconvenient ghosts
Of what a man should be. I know the kind!
I felt the tides of knowledge turn in me
From the intaking of reflected truth
To the outgoing quest adventurous
Of truth itself, whose will is to be sought;
I felt the stirrings in me of new pangs
And agonies of light, and therein strove
Prophetic all the strength that after me
Wrestled with angels. Fellow and friend went by,

Of these embattled issues unaware;
I pitied them, as things by nature doomed,
For in the sun then laboring up to dawn,
No more should folk so feeble run about
Calling the dead to do their thinking for them.
My hope delays—still is the dawn put off.
Ye that now hear me, are ye modern all?
No comfortable ghost among you? Should I be
In the wide world less solitary now?

Look on the face those human seasons wore,
What mingled light and color, mirth and love,
When silent in the crowd I watched and thought.
I saw the fiery cross, lifted in anger,
March against unbelief, God's sepulchre;
I heard the courtly maker and his lute
Warring with song against his lady's heart;
The new-born joy and dignity of toil
Came sounding on, in brotherhood majestic,
While the great lord, to hold his vassals true,
Bound them with accidental loyalties.
I saw the world astir, life at the quick,
But turned aside, and in a quiet room
Nobler accomplishment far off prepared.
Look kindly back on those departed times,
And be not proud; those times ask much of you.

(Exit)



Pope Innocent III and the Crusaders

The Crusaders of the thirteenth and of the two previous centuries were sometimes princes, sometimes adventurers, sometimes mere land-seekers, sometimes members of orders sworn to save the Holy Sepulchre from the Infidels, sometimes friars and pilgrims, sometimes even holy-women and little children. Religious fervor, party hatred, desire for commercial gain and papal power each played its part in sending the West in arms against the East. Whatever the reason of their going, all the Crusaders at times must have felt that deep religious sentiment which is difficult to dissociate from the life of the Middle Ages.

The hymn of this scene is the song of the first Crusaders. The words and the music are both dated about 1095. The speech of the Pope is adapted from a passage in Joinville.

The Knights Hospitallers, *called also the Knights of St. John of Jerusalem. They were established sometime prior to 1113 and wore a red surcoat with a white Maltese cross.*

The Knights Templars. *They were established in 1119 and wore a white surcoat with a long red cross.*

The Teutonic Knights. *They were established in 1190, and wore a white surcoat with a black cross.*

Knights outside the orders.

Innocent III (1160–1216): *Greatest of mediaeval popes, friend of the begging friars.*

St. Francis of Assisi (1182–1226): *First of the Franciscans.*

St. Dominic (1170–1221): *Founder of the Dominicans.*

Pilgrims. Friars.

SCENE I

THE CRUSADERS

(The Crusaders enter singing and their leaders take their stand in the center of the stage)

CRUSADERS

Ierusalem mirabilis,
Urbs beatior aliis,
Quam permanens optabilis,
Gaudentibus te angelis.

(Pope Innocent III advances to the center of the stage and lifts up a cross)

INNOCENT III

Brothers, behold the honor God has done you!
Chosen in this high enterprise, ye go
To the deliverance of our blessed Lord.
Heaven is your aid, as ye Heaven's aid would be,
And them whom God will help, no man can harm.

CRUSADERS

Illuc debemus pergere,
Nostros honores vendere,
Templum Dei acquirere,
Saracenos destruere.

(Exeunt)

The court of Frederick II in southern Italy presents a striking contrast to the scene before it. Gay, irreligious, pleasure loving, filled with the learning of the Saracens, and graced by care-free Bohemians from all Europe, the court was frowned upon by the Pope; and the Emperor was more than once excommunicated. In poetry, in art, in science, and in law Frederick's court was, however, one of the most important of the Middle Ages.

The date of the scene is about 1225. The first song is by Giraut de Borneil and is given in the translation of Justin H. Smith ("Troubadours at Home," Putnam). The second song is by Neidhart von Reuenthal. The music of the songs is that written for them in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries.

Frederick II (1194–1250): *King of Sicily. Holy Roman Emperor after 1220, King of Jerusalem. "German by blood, Italian by birth, Arab by training." Patron of arts and sciences, law giver, unwilling Crusader.*

Henry (b. 1221); Enzio (b. 1220): *Sons of Frederick.*

Richard: *High Chamberlain.*

Neidhart von Reuenthal *(first half 13th century): a Minnesinger.*

A Troubadour.

Two Saracen dancing girls.

Pier della Vigna (1190–1249): *Jurist, first sonneteer of Italy, favorite of Frederick.* Theodore: *The Emperor's philosopher.* The Praepostius: *Head of Frederick's school of Medicine at Salerno.* Leonardo Fibonacci of Pisa (b. 1175): *A mathematician.* Antoli, The Jew: *Translator of Averroës.* Michael the Scot (c. 1170–c. 1235): *Alchemist, astrologer, necromancer, physician, translator.* Herman the German (c. 1200–1270): *Translator of Averroës and Aristotle.*

Saracen men at arms, Teutonic Knights, Moors, Sicilians.

SCENE II

TROUBADOURS AND MINNESINGERS AT THE COURT OF FREDERICK II

(Enter the court, after them the Emperor, who mounts the throne)

FREDERICK

Are the troubadours here?

COURT CHAMBERLAIN

All but Elia Cairel.

FREDERICK

Why comes he not?

COURT CHAMBERLAIN

He answered, "Let my Emperor take the cross
As he hath promised Holy Church. A Knight
Fights out of doors; the women keep the house."

(The Emperor recovers from his surprise at the rebuke, and continues nonchalantly)

FREDERICK

Always the men go singing to the wars,
The women without glory wait at home.
Is not the waiting brave?

SARACEN DANCING GIRL

Yea, *men* please God,
They see the world, *they* get themselves a name!
We wait at home like children and behave,
Or hear the troubadour, who thrives on heartaches,
Warble his latest pain.

FREDERICK

Thou needst not hear him;
There are enough of us who like his song.

SARACEN DANCING GIRL

Signor, I see far off a happier age
When women shall have free and useful hours,
No longer the mere audience of the lute,
Nor parcel of that household furniture
Their masters leave behind!

FREDERICK

Wouldst change things so?
If ye would, the men won't! Come, Sir Troubadour;
How fares thy study in the art of love?
Art thou an aspirant, at the threshold kneeling?
A suppliant, low-knocking at the door?
Or dost thou hear her voice, as suitors hear?
Or dost thou enter, laureate of love?

TROUBADOUR

I will sing an *aubade* or dawn song, wherein first the friend speaks who keeps watch over the lover and his lady.

(Sings)
O glorious king, true radiance and light;
Lord, powerful God, be pleased with gracious might
To guard my friend, for since the night descended
He turns not back from perils where he wended.
And soon will come the morning.

Fair friend,—asleep, or wakeful in delight,
Serenely rouse, nor slumber more to-night!
For in the east the star hath well ascended
That brings the day; I know that night is ended,
And soon will come the morning.

I call, fair friend. Oh, let my singing warn,
And sleep no more! The birds that watch for morn
Begin to chant, and 'mid the thicket hover;
I fear the rival will find out the lover,—
And soon will come the morning.

Fair friend, the window! Look, and do not scorn
The counselling stars that scarce the heavens adorn!
That I am right, in those pale fires discover,
Else yours a loss you never will recover,
And soon will come the morning.

I have not slept, fair friend, since you were there,
But on my knees have made unceasing prayer
That Mary's Son would grant you His protection,
And give you back to my sincere affection,
And soon will come the morning.

Fair friend, remember how at yonder stair
You begged and prayed that I would sleep forbear,
And watch all night in dutiful subjection;
You slight me now, you scorn the recollection,
And soon will come the morning.

(Speaks)
Now the lover answers from within.

(Sings)
My fair sweet friend, such joys my coming stay,
I would there were no dawning and no day;
Within my arms the loveliest form reposes
That earth e'er saw; they're hardly worth two roses,—
That rival and the morning!

SARACEN DANCING GIRL

You look not so love-lucky as you sing.
I swear none ever loved you! A lute-warrior!
Our hands are for the hands that fight with swords.

TROUBADOUR

Fair one, they say love never is deserved—
Neither the joys nor punishments of love.
Now I deserved neither my lady's heart
Nor thy tongue.

FREDERICK

Peace! Will another sing?

THE MINNESINGER, NEIDHART VON REUENTHAL

(Sings)

Welcome, Summer, long-desired,
Fair befall the fruithful hour!
May, the merry month, begins
To set the world in flower.

He that asks a little joy,
Lo, the earth with him is glad,—
Shadowy wood, and sunlit field,
And meadow wonder-clad.

There the birds are singing now,
Silent once in ice and snow.
Sing to the May, your praises sing!
Winter, hearing, faster shivers
Toward the long ago.

FREDERICK

Damsel, wilt thou adventure wit again?
Or shall we let this singer go unmocked?
Yea, let us leave off mocking, and consider
How we may smooth yon old and angry Pope.
Elia Cairel is right—vows must be kept;
I must prepare some day to take the cross.

(Exeunt)

The Chief Figures of the Court of Frederick II

The mediaeval craft-gilds were an important feature of the industrial life of Europe from the twelfth century. All the workers in one trade organized for common worship, common commercial protection, and mutual personal benefit. They had charters, laws, and symbols of their trade; they regulated the amount, quality, and price of the work of their members and stood sponsor for their good behavior.

These craft-gilds developed alongside of the merchant-gilds of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries. The merchant-gilds were unions of all those within a town who owned land and were interested in trade. They arose as guardians of the peace, and as such fostered commerce. They were chartered by lords and kings, and took to themselves the right to regulate all sales to those within the town and all purchases from those without it. As towns grew and industries increased and specialized, many workmen who were excluded from the merchant-gilds organized the craft-gilds. The groups of those interested in the same trades gradually acquired the civil powers which the older gilds had possessed, and soon the craft-gilds, not the one merchant-gild, stood as the guardian of the welfare of the town.

Craft-gilds developed in much the same way in British and in continental towns. London and Paris probably presented the greatest complexity of organization in the thirteenth century, but smaller towns in England, Scotland, the Low Countries, France, Germany, and Italy displayed much the same industrial situation.

SCENE III

MEDIAEVAL INDUSTRY

A PROCESSION OF THE GILDS OF LONDON

The Clothing Gilds

The Weavers
The Dyers
The Fullers
The Cloth Workers
The Drapers
The Tailors
The Glovers
The Shoemakers
The Cobblers

The Food Gilds

The White Bakers
The Brown Bakers
The Brewers
The Butchers
The Fish-mongers
The Wine Merchants
The Pepperers

The Building Gilds

The Bricklayers
The Joiners
The Carpenters
The Plasterers
The Pavers
The Glaziers
The Painters

Various Gilds

The Innholders
The Goldsmiths
The Silversmiths
The Musicians
The Bookbinders
The Cordwainers
The Barbers, Chirurgeons, and Peruke-makers
The Wax Chandlers
The Stationers
The Basket-makers

The thirteenth century was the time of Magna Charta and of the trial by jury, but its dominant political feature was feudalism. In depicting feudal custom, Louis IX is chosen as the chief figure because his character and his ability to keep his vassals in order made him one of the great mediaeval overlords.

The events represented in this scene occurred in 1241, and are in part described by an eye-witness, the Sire de Joinville.

Louis IX (1215–1270): *King of France, Crusader, Saint.*

Margaret of Provence: *Queen of Louis.*

Blanche of Castile (1187–1252): *Mother of Louis.*

Alphonso, Count of Poitou and Auvergne (1220–1271): *Brother of Louis.*

Robert, Count of Artois: *Brother of Louis.*

John, Count of Dreux (b. 1220).

Hugh, Count of La Marche.

Peter, Count of Brittany.

John, Count of Soissons.

Count of Boulogne.

Count of St. Pol.

Monseigneur, the King of Navarre.

Monseigneur, Imbert de Beaujen.

Monseigneur, Enguerrand de Coucy.

Monseigneur, Archamboult de Bourbon.

Jean de Joinville (1224–1317).

Archbishops, Bishops, Knights, Ladies.
Sergeants of the Count of Poitou.

SCENE IV

A FEUDAL COURT
KING LOUIS IX AT SAUMUR, IN ANJOU

(Enter Alphonso, count of Poitou, and his court)

ALPHONSO

Signors, my brother Louis, King of France,
Hither to Saumur comes, to hold full court.
I will ask knighthood of his sainted hands
For me and thee, good comrade, John of Dreux,
And after will I yield my fealty
To one who has no equal on this earth
For kingship; for he governs first himself,
His people next, and by his knighthood brings
God's order on the mischief of this world.

(Enter King Louis and his train. Alphonso kneels, kisses the King's hand, then leads him to the throne)

LOUIS

Brother, this loving welcome speaks thy heart
True as of old. Now ask of us some grace,
Lest, ere we know, we sink too deep in debt.

ALPHONSO

King, beyond need of purchase we are thine.
Yet I have craved long since this boon of thee—
Make us thy knights, myself and John of Dreux,
My faithful comrade.

LOUIS

Lords, it shall be so.
Sire de Joinville, and thou, Count de la Marche,
Bring swords and spurs.

(The King gives the right spur to the Sire de Joinville, who, kneeling on one knee and putting Alphonso's right foot on his knee, fastens on the spur, signing the candidate's

knee with the cross. In like manner Count de la Marche fastens on the left spur. The King then girds Alphonso with the sword, and embracing him, lifts his right hand and smites him on the shoulder)

LOUIS

Be thou a true knight.

(A priest holds up the crucifix, which Alphonso touches as he makes his vow)

ALPHONSO

I swear to fight for God and Holy Church.

(The ceremony is repeated for Count John of Dreux)

LOUIS

Keep ye your vows; fight only for Lord Christ,
Do nothing that ye would not all men saw,
Say nothing that ye would not all men heard;
Christ sees and hears. Be worthy and upright.
Worth and uprightness are such pleasant things
As even to name is sweetness in the mouth.

(Alphonso, laying aside his arms, stands before the King)

ALPHONSO

King and my brother, in your fealty
Put me, and in your homage, for those lands
And goods bequeathed me by our common father.

LOUIS

Wilt thou in all things be my man?

ALPHONSO

I will.

(Kneels and places his hands between the hands of the King)

Sire, I become thy man. I promise thee
Fealty for the future as my lord
Against all other men, living or dead,
And I will serve thee as the fief requires.

LOUIS

And I receive and take thee as my man,
Giving thee, for a sign of faith, this kiss.

(Alphonso rises and receives his sword. The King addresses the court)

Lords, ye behold this good estate, where dwell
Brotherlike, king and followers at one.
Each hath his place, and called by God thereto,
'Tis his salvation to obey the voice.
The King, who hath his throne from the Most High,
Is Heaven's man; and they that hold from him
Are his; and lower still, who lean on them,
Loyalty within loyalty, are theirs;
So the world's family reaches up to God,
Each in his order perfect, as the stars
That keep their course, or as the angelic host
Rising from thrones and principalities
To Cherubim and Seraphim and Powers,
Yet perfect all, and equal in God's sight.
Scorn not your post, like Lucifer, who aspired
Out of his place, and tumbled down to hell.
The English Barons from that weakling John
Wrested a charter, a mean lawyer's writ,
As though to curb heaven's will before the sheriff.
Yet heard I never that their serfs had ease
From serving them! no charters talked of there!
But if they yield not to the king, shortly
No man to them will yield; the storied house
Of faith will scatter like burnt autumn leaves,
One level blackness. Oh, let freedom be
Obedience, let our charter be God's will!

(Alphonso offers to escort the King to the banquet)

ALPHONSO

Brother, the feast is ready. Yet our life
More from thy goodness profits than from meat.

(Exeunt)

In the third part of the pageant the religious and academic aspects of the thirteenth century find their representation in scenes where Roger Bacon holds the center of the stage. Had men been asked in Bacon's time to name the greatest figure in the learned world they would not have mentioned the English friar. They would have pointed to Albert the Great, or to Thomas Aquinas.

It is Thomas, therefore, greatest of the Schoolmen, the recognized philosopher of the Roman Church, who speaks the prologue to the scenes he yields to Bacon. His talent was early apparent in Italy, his home-land; it was disciplined under Albert the Great in Cologne and Paris; it came to its full manifestation in the "Summa" it created for all the world. As a teacher, Thomas not only convinced his hearers, but he stirred them as well. As a writer, he presented the articles of his faith, in question and answer, reasoned with all the skill and rigor of the logic of deduction, yet he disguised none of the difficulties which its enemies might suggest; but he had such command of the teachings of the ancients and of his contemporaries, and so fused them with the spark of his own genius that he overcame his critics, and left behind him the "final construction of the mediaeval Christian scheme."

PART III

PROLOGUE

THOMAS AQUINAS

Of those who in a troubled age were caught
Between two currents of contending truth,
I was the reconciler. One way the Church
Drew us, the faith delivered to the saints,
And one way drove the mind of Aristotle.

Hither by hands Arabian—Avicenna,
Averroës,—came his philosophy,
A Grecian gift, pleasant and perilous. Then
Young Abelard, the questioner, who would gauge
By reason the furthest mysteries of heaven,
Not in a glass darkly, but face to face
Daring to look on God. That humble man,
Peter the Lombard, for a widow's mite
Then gave to Holy Church the Sentences,
To lay the reckless seas Abelard raised.
Albert the Great, that strong intelligence,
My master, then arose, who greatly toiled
To show truth single in the universe,
And the Philosopher, where true at all,
One with the Fathers and with Holy Writ.
His task I finished, Thomas of Aquino,
And wed indissolubly our ancient faith
Forever with her ancient enemy.
I showed the power of reason—not, like Abelard,
Making presumptuous mockery of heaven,
But in its realm; and where the borders lie
I showed, between what man himself can know,
And what is knowable, but not by man,
And what no man discovers, but receives
From Power, Wisdom, Love, which three God is.

Nature and God make nothing vain; all light
Is to be walked in. Yet illusion oft
This sin-enchanted world deceives; not all
That shining seems, is light. And oft our wills
Are partisan, less loyal to the truth
Than to its radiant ministers. Foothills
Of reason we can climb, therefrom discern
Mountains unclimbed, and further heights therefrom
Argue, though not discerned. Reason alone
Walks lowly; winged with faith, it guides toward heaven.

See now a man whose reason guides toward earth,
And truth he yearns to worship in this world.

(Exit)

The miracle play here presented is adapted from the Chester Cycle. Though a liberty has been taken with the facts, in dating this particular play so early and locating it in Oxford, it furnishes a scene typical of the thirteenth-century English town.

"Sumer is icumen in" is a Northumbrian round. Our text and music come from a manuscript written at Reading, forty miles from London, and dated about 1230. "It is the only piece in six real parts known to exist before the fifteenth century; it is a strict canon, and the earliest canon known; it also offers the earliest example of a ground-bass."

The hymn "Veni, veni, Emmanuel" was woven out of the Antiphons used at Advent. Neale, whose English translation is well known, believes that an unknown author of the twelfth century is responsible for the hymn as we have it. The text printed is from Daniel's "Thesaurus Hymnologicus." The music is old Plain Song.

ROGER BACON (1214–1294).

ROBERT GROSSETÊTE (c. 1175–1253): *Rector Scholarum and Chancellor, Rector of the Franciscans at Oxford, from 1235 Bishop of Lincoln, scholar, translator, sacred and secular author.*

JOHN BASINGSTOKE (d. 1252): *Archdeacon of Leicester from 1235, student of Greek at Athens, scholar, grammarian, translator.*

JOHN PECKHAM (d. 1292): *Archbishop of Canterbury from 1279. Student at Paris, reader in Oxford.*

Members of the Gilds of Barbers and Waxchandlers.
Students, townsfolk, countrymen, friars.

SCENE I

BACON AT OXFORD

(Townsfolk and students enter in haste, and take their places, looking eagerly down the street)

TOWNSFOLK

The Gilds are coming, the Gilds are coming,
This place is best. The players will be here.

(The Gilds of the Barbers and Waxchandlers appear, with a Miracle play)

MIRACLE PLAY

(Enter Abraham and Isaac)

ABRAHAM

Now Isaac, son, go we our way
To yonder mount, if that we may.

ISAAC

My dear father, I will assay
To follow you full fain.

(Abraham, being minded to slay his son Isaac, lifts up his hands and saith following)

O, my heart will break in three!
To hear thy words I have pity.
As Thou wilt, Lord, so must it be,
To Thee I will obey.

ISAAC

Father, tell me of this case,
Why you have drawn your sword,
And bear it naked in this place.

ABRAHAM

Isaac, son, peace, I pray thee,
Thou breakest my heart even in three.

ISAAC

I pray you, Father, keep nothing from me,
But tell me what you think.

ABRAHAM

Ah, Isaac, Isaac, I must thee kill!

ISAAC

Alas, father, is that your will,
Your own child for to spill
  Upon this hill's brink?
If I have trespassed in any degree,
With a yard you may beat me;
Put up your sword, if your will be,
  For I am but a child.

ABRAHAM

O, my dear son, I am sorry
To do to thee this great annoy;
God's commandment do must I,
  His works are ever full mild.

ISAAC

Would God my mother were here with me!
She would kneel down upon her knee,
Praying you, Father, if it may be,
  For to save my life.

ABRAHAM

O comely creature, but I thee kill,
I grieve my God, and that full ill,
I may not work against His will,
  But ever obedient be.

ISAAC

Father, seeing you must needs do so,
Let it pass lightly and overgo;
Kneeling on my knees two,
  Your blessing on me spread.

ABRAHAM

My blessing, dear son, give I thee,
And thy mother's with heart free.
The blessing of the Trinity,
  My dear son, on thee light!

ISAAC

Father, I pray you hide my eyes
That I see not the sword so keen;
Your stroke, Father, would I not see,
  Lest I before it shrink.

ABRAHAM

Ah, son! my heart will break in three,
To hear thee speak such words to me.
Jesu, on me have Thou pity!

ISAAC

Now, Father, I see that I shall die.
Almighty God in majesty,
My soul I offer unto thee!
  Lord, to it be kind.

(Here let Abraham take and bind his son, Isaac, upon the altar; let him make a sign as though he would cut off his head with his sword; then let the angel come and take the sword by the end and stay it, saying)

ANGEL

Abraham, my servant dear!

ABRAHAM

Lo, Lord, I am all ready here.

ANGEL

Lay not thy sword in no manner
  On Isaac, thy dear darling;
And do to him no annoy,
For thou dreadest God, well wot I,
Who of thy son hast no mercy,
  To fulfil his bidding.
Therefore God has sent by me
A lamb that is both good and gay,
Into this place as thou mayst see,
  Lo, have him right here.

ABRAHAM

Ah, Lord of heaven and king of bliss,
Thy bidding shall certainly be done!
Sacrifice here sent me is,
And all, Lord, through thy grace!

(*Exeunt the Gild with the Miracle players*)

(*The townsfolk who have gathered to watch the play, begin singing*)

Sumer is icumen in,
Lhude sing cuccu;
Groweth sed and bloweth med,
And springth the wode nu;
Awe bleteth after lomb,
Lhouth after calve cu;
Bulluc stereth, bucke verteth,
Murie sing cuccu.
Wel singes thu cuccu;
Ne swik thu naver nu.

(*As the song ends the Friars are heard in the distance singing. The Friars enter*)

Veni, veni Emmanuel!
Captivum solve Israel!
Qui gemit in exilio,
Privatus Dei Filio,
Gaude, gaude, Emmanuel
Nascetur pro te, Israel.

Veni o Iesse virgula!
Ex hostis tuos ungula,
De specu tuos tartari
Educ, et antro barathri.
Gaude, gaude, Emmanuel etc.

Veni, veni o oriens!
Solare nos adveniens,
Noctis depelle nebulas,
Dirasque noctis tenebras.
Gaude, gaude, Emmanuel etc.

Veni clavis Davidica!
Regna reclude coelica,
Fac iter tutum superum,
Et claude vias inferum.
Gaude, gaude, Emmanuel etc.

Veni, veni Adonai!
Qui populo in Sinai
Legem dedisti vertice,
In Maiestate gloriae.
Gaude, gaude, Emmanuel etc.

(Exeunt Friars and townsfolk)

FIRST STUDENT

What tale is this, Roger, that thou wouldst leave us?
Can Mother Oxford teach thee nothing more?

SECOND STUDENT

Ay, and he still must lead us by the nose!
I hear he's taking with him three or four.

ROGER BACON

Jest not, good friends! I gladly would not go,
But Paris is the mother of philosophy.
There are the masters of the mind; I crave
Her science, her strict knowledge of the tongues.
She is the doorway of the ancient world,
Whereto the flame and glitter of our days
Are but the twilight of a half-filled lamp.
Rich is the table our young Oxford spreads,
But knowledge overseas surpasses far
Fountains of youth or the unfailing loaf
Travelers tell us of, but bring not home.
Yea, in the interchange of wit with wit
For greater wisdom, strangers profit best;
Friendship oft kills the challenge of the mind.
We shall bring back to England such a light,
If God so will, as time shall not outwear.

(Exeunt)

Bacon's speeches in this scene are adapted from passages in the "Opus Majus" and the "Opus Tertium." The student song, the "Confessio Goliardi," dating approximately from 1193, is attributed to Walter Map. The music is of a later period.

SCENE II

ROGER BACON AT PARIS

(*Enter students of the University*)

FIRST STUDENT

What warrant hath this Englishman to show
Our masters here at Paris such contempt?
He hath some pattern in his crazy head,
And finding nothing in the world to match,
He needs must wreck us all.

SECOND STUDENT

Was Oxford, now,
Too good for him?

THIRD STUDENT

Marry, 'twas worse than this,
Else had he never left the beef and beer.

FOURTH STUDENT

Just three months here, and what a bag of cures
Already for this sickish world—new things
To know, new ways to learn them!

FIFTH STUDENT

Here he comes.

(*Enter Roger Bacon*)

FIRST STUDENT

Our talk, Dan Bacon, rattles on thy name.
Come, man, defend thyself. What's wrong with us
That makes you go so strange?

ROGER BACON

No quarrel with you,
Fellows, but with our betters quarrel enough.
Hither I came as to the well of truth,
Or of such wisdom in the way of books
As the wide fame of Paris would imply.
But the old ignorances flourish here,
And knowledge here is the old muddle still,
The law's the study—hey for a fat purse!
But science and serene philosophy
Are cripples here, and they that use them, fools.

SECOND STUDENT

How wouldst thou cure them, Roger?

ROGER BACON

I would first
Cast out the make-believe philosophers,
Then by the help of Aristotle restore
True science. Here a common know-it-all
Can cite himself co-equal with the great—
Aristotle, Averroës, Avicenna,
John Smith—which of you knows the difference?
One living rascal, not far off, enjoys
More credit with you than all masters dead.
With deep compassion do I speak of him
And of the herd of long-ears he misleads,
But without speaking, truth cannot appear,
And truth, the Scripture saith, is above all.

THIRD STUDENT

We know your man! Touch somewhat on his sins.

ROGER BACON

He has four faults. The first is vanity;
The next is his unspeakable gift for falsehood;
The third, voluminous superfluity;
And fourth, from his philosophy he omits
Useful and pleasant things, the principles
Without which what he keeps cannot be true.

THIRD STUDENT

Have at him, England, strike the villain down!
You've found the way to make the masters love you.

FOURTH STUDENT

When thou hast flayed the folly from his bones,
What then, Roger?

ROGER BACON

I would amend the texts
For both philosophy and theology,
So we might read just what the ancients wrote.
Man's ignorance in general anchors firm

On four good pillars—authority, the first,
That tells you what is what, and keeps you dark;
Custom, the second—mill-round for the mule!
The third, opinion,—when you flatter me,
I flatter you, so each makes other wise;
And last, the pride of knowledge unpossessed,
Our pride of knowing things that are not so;
These are the fourfold strength of ignorance.
But for divinity a special well
Is sunk, a fount of error never dry—
They who translate are ignorant of tongues,
Know nothing of what tongue the book is in,
And nothing of the tongue they put it into,
Nor anything of what the book's about.
So for God's glory every day they spew
A page of jargon to confound the world.
Neither philosophy nor theology
Will prosper till we set our books to rights.

THIRD STUDENT

Some sense in that, Roger, and no great toil;
Straining of eyes and bending of backs will do it.
Then comes millennium?

ROGER BACON

This but clears the way!
Then comes the master science, the one art
Divine,—experiment, the door of knowledge,
Nay, the foundation of it and the roof,
The warrant of all thought. For arguments
Are but vain sound till the experiment
Tries their conclusion. Only experience—

THIRD STUDENT

The truth at last! Experience is the thing!
(Sings)
Meum est propositum in taberna mori,
Ubi vina proxima morientis ori;
Tunc cantabunt laetius angelorum chori:
"Deus sit propitius isti potatori."

(Exeunt the students laughing and singing. Bacon stands angry and disgusted, then exits the other side of the stage)

This scene at the University of Paris on All Saints' Day in the year 1245 represents Roger Bacon at the end of his career as a student. The degree of Master of Theology, at that time also called the Doctorate, was probably the most coveted the University could give. Ten to twelve years of study were necessary to attain it, after mastering the more elementary subjects. Save in exceptional circumstances no one under thirty-five could receive the degree, which was at the same time the license to teach. Bacon's speech is adapted from a passage in the "Opus Majus."

ROGER BACON (1214-1294).

WILLIAM OF AUVERGNE (d. 1299): *From 1228 Bishop of Paris and Chancellor of the University.*

LORDS OF PARLEMENT.

CANONS OF PARIS.

MASTERS OF THEOLOGY: *Members of the Gild of Masters, including Bishops and Archbishops, and Albertus Magnus* (1202-1280), *and Alexander of Hales* (*d.* 1245), *Presiding Master.*

THE RECTOR OF THE UNIVERSITY: *Head of the Faculty of Arts.*

THE PROCTORS OF THE FOUR NATIONS: *The French* (*including all Romance countries*), *the Norman, the Picard* (*Low Countries*), *the English* (*including the Germans*). *The Four Nations represented the students of Arts, organized according to countries.*

REPRESENTATIVES FROM THE FACULTIES OF CANON LAW AND MEDICINE.

THE PARANYMPHUS: *Academic herald and secretary to the Chancellor.*

BACCALARII FORMATI: *Candidates for the degree of Master of Theology.*

YOUNGER STUDENTS OF THEOLOGY, *including Thomas Aquinas* (1225-1274) *and Bonaventura* (1221-1274).

SCENE III

THE UNIVERSITY OF PARIS CONFERS THE DOCTORATE ON ROGER BACON

(The Bishop's Hall. Enter the Masters and after them the Paranymphus)

THE PARANYMPHUS

Masters and doctors in theology,
Now is All Saints' Day, when your votes are given,
Each second year, for fit and chosen ones
For stewards of the mysteries of heaven.
This day an English scholar, Roger Bacon,
Asks to be licensed Doctor. He has run
The long course charted for aspiring minds;
Ten years they voyage ere the port be won;
Oft they despair, like castaways afloat,
Till the seven seas of weariness be past;
Now lights the welcome dove on Noah's boat,
No more the barren vigil, land at last!
I, as a groomsman, bid the wedding guests
Come to this sacrament this holy tide.
See on our vows how rich heaven's blessing rests,
When man, the child of God, takes Truth for bride.

(Exit Paranymphus. Enter the Chancellor, the Baccalarii Formati, etc.)

CHANCELLOR

Masters, my messenger has summoned you
According to our custom, to decide
Whether the candidates who petition now
Shall have the license. Only one name appears—
Roger Bacon, of England. Has he performed
Duly the residence, exercise, and acts
Named in the statutes? Has he proved himself
Diligent, clean in morals, sound in faith?

PRESIDING MASTER

Masters, there is some whisper of this man,
A scandal that his doctrine wanders wide
From our strict science of theology.
Reason he sets too high, custom he scorns.
What has been held for ages is to him
No truer than the thing he proves to-day.
These are but rumors; yet to license him,
Without some firm accounting, were not well.

PROCTOR OF THE ENGLISH NATION

Masters, the candidate may be approved.
He has his nation's vote; to me, their Proctor,
He swears obedience, and to his Faculty,
And to his nation. Ask him what ye please
When he is licensed; he will answer well,
Or if he errs, accuse him to the Church!

(*A pause*)

CHANCELLOR

No further question? Do ye vote for him?

(*They raise their hands—some reluctantly*)

Bring in the candidate.

(*Roger Bacon enters and kneels before the chancellor, the others standing*)

By the authority of Almighty God, and of the Apostles Peter and Paul, and of the Apostolic See, I give thee license to dispute, to read and preach, and to perform in the Faculty of Theology all that pertains to a Doctor, in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost. Amen.

(*Places the biretta on Bacon's head*)

Do thou begin, in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. Amen.

(*Bacon kisses the Chancellor's hand, and takes his seat among the Doctors*)

PRESIDING MASTER

Doctor, we hear a question, whether thou
Art loyal priest or half philosopher.
Tell us thy judgment of philosophy.

(*After a pause, Bacon rises*)

BACON

We in the Church should know philosophy,
And in philosophy should obey the Church,
For in them both a single goodness shines.
Wisdom is one; all pages that are wise—
Sacred or secular—are mines of faith,
Rich treasuries of doctrine; for God grants
Even to the philosophers His truth.
Therefore to holy uses should we bend
All human wit, lest, undirected so,
It serve no use at all. For know we not
The infidel philosophers are damned?
They, knowing God, yet glorified Him not,
Therefore their works are folly, their own words
Condemn them. For without the breath of God
Nor man nor wisdom lives. Good Alfarabius
Says in his book on science, as the boy
Unlettered is to the most learned man,
So is philosophy to the wisdom of God.
Yet of this world our knowledge well may grow,
Since man's inventions are imperfect all,
And we who coming later do inherit
Old instruments and disciplines of mind,
Should, using them, ourselves build nobler things;
For, saith Boethius, nothing is more miserable
Than to move always in the path we know,
Never discover, never invent, never explore.

We that are called to the immeasurable
Wisdom of God, if in the faith dwells light,
Should overstep whate'er the pagan knows
And pass beyond his reach. His twilight dreams
Should to our vision minister,—yea, the truth
He masters, mastering him yet more,
Compels him captive to the one true God.
Wise Avicenna and Alfarabius,

Tullius, Seneca, and Aristotle,
Infidels all, yet turned their eyes on God,
As a good soldier on his captain waits.
There is one God, say the philosophers;
In essence one, whose wisdom, goodness, power,
Are infinite; one God in persons three,
Father and Son and Spirit, who from nothing
Created all. Philosophers say this.
Further, they touch on doctrines, many a one,
Of Christ our Saviour, of the Virgin Blest,
Of angels, of the rising from the dead,
Of the last judgment, of the life to come—
Blessedness for the obedient, and pain
Eternal for the scorners of His will.

These things are written in philosophy,
So constant in the study of wise books,
Of Holy Scripture, and all books beside,
Were the philosophers. Should we be less wise?
Nay, let us sift all wisdom thoroughly,
Lest, being fools, we lose our part in God.

(He takes his seat again. A pause)

PRESIDING MASTER

Some truth is here—perchance, some danger too.
Son, to be humble is the latest art
The wise man learns. Study humility.
Snatch not too rudely at the temple veil.

(Exeunt)

Roger Bacon and the Masters of the University

Although Florence stands well outside of Bacon's experiences, so far as we know, yet the thirteenth century to the average modern reader means Dante and his city.

This scene, though fanciful, is based upon a well-known passage in the "Vita Nuova." The place is supposed to be a street near the Chiesa di San Martino; the time, May, 1290, a month before Beatrice died. The attempt has been made to imagine an earlier Dante than the author of the "Vita Nuova," a character in process of becoming spiritualized.

Dante Alighieri (1265–1321).

Beatrice Portinari (June? 1266–June 8, 1290): *The wife of Simone de' Bardi, the heroine of the "Vita Nuova," and the inspiration of the "Divina Commedia."*

Guido Cavalcanti (1250?–1300): *Florentine poet, whom Dante refers to in the "Vita Nuova" as his best friend.*

Giotto di Bondone (1266–1337): *Florentine artist, disciple of Cimabue, and intimate friend of Dante.*

Brunetto Latini (1210?–1294): *Florentine statesman and writer, friend of Guido and of Dante, to whom Dante pays a noble tribute in the "Inferno," xv. 82–5.*

Giovanna: *A lady whom Guido Cavalcanti loved, and whom he called, in one of his "ballate," "Springtime" ("Primavera"). In the "Vita Nuova" (§24) Dante records his meeting with Beatrice and Giovanna, and he plays upon the name "Primavera," making it to mean "She will come first," because as they walked this lady preceded Beatrice.*

INTERLUDE

FLORENCE AT THE END OF THE CENTURY

(Citizens of Florence pass in each direction. Enter Guido Cavalcanti, who paces up and down; then Giotto di Bondone)

GIOTTO

Hail, Guido Cavalcanti! Dost thou carry
Hither the sorrows of our Florence?

GUIDO

Here
I lie in wait for Dante. Pray thee, tarry.
The master Cimabue learns to fear
A rival, so they say.

GIOTTO

Too wise is he
To fear one, were I one.

GUIDO

Thy turn is near,
Now the Bargello fresco goes to thee.
Thou wilt paint Dante's portrait in, they say—
Perchance they say too much! This penalty,
To live on idle tongues, ye great folks pay.

GIOTTO

If this be greatness, I have had my taste;
Good master Cimabue walked one day
(My neighbors vouch for this) across the waste,
Where I, a barefoot urchin, kept the flock.
Frescoes of sheep along a wall smooth-faced
He found me sketching with a bit of rock!

GUIDO

That tale will live; history thrives on such.
Fame, like true love, keeps extra facts in stock
To feed its faith on, it believes so much.

GIOTTO

Dante, now, swears his love-struck dreams are true;
He's angry if you put him to the touch.
He'll make a saint of Beatrice, ere he's through.

GUIDO

He thinks the virtues of the Spouse of Heaven,
Veiled in this lady, walk before his view.
Strange if that fiery soul of his, love-driven,
Should blazon in the eyes of wondering time
Her whom he little knows, scarce speaks to, even!

GIOTTO

Always he will be pondering that fair rime
Of Guinicelli's, on the gentle heart,
How love and gentleness make perfect chime,
But ever love and evil dwell apart.
He takes her for an angel sent to drive
Wrath from him, and love teaches her the art.

GUIDO

Giotto, to test her influence now I strive.
He told me, though he burn with hell's own wrath,
Yet, should this lady suddenly arrive,
Charity cools the flame—yea, if he hath
Her salutation, so her lips but move,
Though his sworn foe that moment cross his path,
His spirit sings no other tune but love.

GIOTTO

Could he forgive Corso Donati so?
I wonder!

GUIDO

Even what I was thinking of!
Now, if my little plot works, I shall know.
This way Ser Dante, ere the next hour ring,
Walks homeward. Vanna, in the secret too—

GIOTTO

Thy Primavera, beautiful as Spring?
How Dante liked the nickname!

GUIDO

Fair and fair
And fair again she is! She plots to bring
Beatrice, if heaven favor, down that stair
Just at the moment Dante's sulphurous rage
At Corso's name shoots up its devil-flare.

GIOTTO

Be wary lest too soon thou turn the page;
Prick him to anger early in thy plan,
And she may greet him in the cooling stage.

GUIDO

His anger will not cool.

(Enter Dante)

Behold this man
That seemeth not himself, so changed he is!

DANTE

Guido, good friend, so yesternight began
Thy greeting with a challenge like to this;
Am I so changed?

GIOTTO

The tokens in thy face,
Dante, no bachelor of love could miss.
Thou shalt be love's own poet, Guido says.

DANTE

I would be one who sings as love shall tell.

GUIDO

So? What if Corso prosper in love's grace?

DANTE

Speak not of him! Speak of Forese well,
Call blessings on Piccarda, but of him
Nothing,—or pray God blast him soon in hell.

GIOTTO

Is he so evil? Though his wit be grim—
I know he called Vieri "Peter's Ass,"
And Guido here "The Spiggot"—

DANTE

Though his whim,
Sayst thou, be for wife-murder, let it pass!

GIOTTO

That was not proved.

DANTE

Who doubts it? Such another
Is not, nor lived since Azzolino was.
Florence he'd sell as he would sell his mother.
He will not fight—he stabs; he'll stab thee yet,
Guido, though now your feud ye feign to smother.

GIOTTO

The echo of such anger is regret,
Dante; thou art too hard.

DANTE

Why, even the sainted
Piccarda says his heart on sin is set;
Her zeal of sisterly forgiveness fainted,
When to tear off her nun's veil he saw fit.

(Enter Brunetto Latini)

GUIDO

Hail, Ser Brunetto, my once well-acquainted
Councilor; too seldom now we meet.

BRUNETTO LATINI

Guido, the little strength my long years leave me—

(He sees Dante)

Ah, Son, what anger on thy face is writ!

DANTE

We spoke of Corso. Never God forgive me,
If without wrath I name the false and craven!

BRUNETTO LATINI

Son, thy fierce justice, thy dark hatreds grieve me.
Bathe deep in love; once love the heart hath laven,

Even here man grows eternal hour by hour.
Follow thy star; thou shalt find glorious haven.
Though for a time this people, blind and sour,
Heap with ingratitude thy loneliness,
Yet when at last thy fame begins to flower,
All factions for a share in thee shall press.
Then shalt thou be their hunger and their food,
But far then from the goat shall be the grass.

(Exit)

DANTE

If my desire be filled, from this abode
Death shall not take thee soon. But him who works
Evil against my city, may his blood
Spatter the stones where now his soft foot lurks;
Dragged helpless at the tail of a wild beast
May his bad carcass toss by leaps and jerks
Toward the abyss, where pain shall ne'er be ceased;
Faster at every step may the steed go,
Till of his flesh remain no shred the least.
May the heavens turn not long, ere this be so!

(Enter Giovanna and Beatrice, who in this order cross the stage)

BEATRICE

Hail, Dante!

(Exit Giovanna and Beatrice)

GIOTTO

(Whispers to Guido)

Now the spell is on him!

DANTE

Ye
Who watch in the everlasting day, where no
Sleep nor night hinders, but all truth ye see,
And there the bread of angels satisfies,
Even now ye give of your felicity
Foredream and promise! Make all scholars wise
With that clear wisdom whereon God afar
Was thinking when He made the happy skies!
Grant us the love that moveth sun and star!

(Exeunt)

This speech is based upon what seem fair inferences from Bacon's own words in the "Opus Majus" and the "Opus Tertium." Whether or not he was right in his account of himself, this is the sort of account he gave. The date of the scene is supposed to be 1294.

SCENE IV

ROGER BACON IN OLD AGE

(Enter Bacon alone)

ROGER BACON

After experiments innumerable
I try old age, neglect, and loss of friends.
Is there advantage from neglect of me?
Or do the stars to wisdom favorable
Withdraw their light?
Darkness my vigil ends,
Darkness and insult and foul jealousy.
Franciscan, am I? a cursed friar
Who to be poor should labor hard,
Not meddle with God's mysteries, nor blight
The ignorance of my betters? Abelard,
Thou too wast insolent, thou blessed briar!
How thou didst sting their shoulders, God be praised!
God grant my lash has swollen higher
The welts thy wholesome scourging raised!

Here's my old bitterness.
Meekness I never mastered,
Nor learned that fine address
To prove my man a fool, yet spare his pride.
Yet I hold, an honest man,
Lest error fatten this world's troubles,
Cheerfully brings his thoughts to strict account;
Only a dastard,
Once he is astride,
Would rather hurt his fellows than dismount.
In Paris long ago I ran
The pleasant gauntlet of their hate
Merely for pricking their pet bubbles.
Hatred I got instead of thanks!

Oxford, my mother, though in youth
I left thy calm and kindly halls
For some sweet wilderness, where truth
Unearned, like manna, daily falls,
Until my folly spent its rage,
Thy patient shrewdness bade me roam;
Then from my futile pilgrimage
Without reproach didst take me home.
A quiet room, a shelf for books,
The instruments his science asks,
For nothing more the scholar looks,
But settles there and does his tasks.
Oxford, thy gift was peace, the mood
To follow truth from cause to cause,
And comradeship to stir the blood,
And for a subtle strength, applause.
Yet the pure spring was changed to brine.
Even here the malice showed itself at last,
But through no bitterness of mine.
All knowledge to the fool is sheer offense;
First a small hand of envy, then a cloud,
Then the storm gathers fast.
They hinted harmless magic, till their sense
Of unused virtue once awoke,
Then shrieked their folly long and loud
In tales of barter with the fiend
And fables of a brazen head that spoke.
Who of his cloth of time would lose one shred
To put speech in a brazen head?
Too common is that miracle, God knows!

Clement, thou kindly Father, dost thou see
From the high station where Christ's Vicars rest,
How far astray thy purpose goes?
Justice was thy heart's desire;
Yet truth and I abide,
Wasted, forgot, old prisoners untried,
Only the flame of righteous ire
Warming a little life within the breast.
Thou didst command my doctrine to be brought,
Thyself wouldst weigh within
What error lurked, what wilful sin;
I, with God's praises singing in my brain,
Laid bare to thee my boldest thought;

Twice I wrote, and once again,
My knowledge, my conjecture, and my hope;
Three books I sent thee by his hand who best
Could show the method and the scope.
Ah, my taste of phantom joy!
The Titan burdens of thy days
Never the mood, the moment gave,
Till to the unremembering grave
World-weary thou didst go.
Or finding with the impartial gold
Confused, too oft the harsh alloy
Of my unbridled bitterness,
Not wholly fit for blame or praise,
Therefore didst thou leave the tangle so?

Now comes old age; my time is spent.
Yet Christ, who gave the knowledge of Himself
To doubting Thomas, not by argument,
But by the very touch of hands, draws near;
Not without hope I go.
Sometimes I see far off, in these last hours,
Life without fetters, manhood without fear
Walking with God—this world more wonderful
As it is known, men nobler as they know.
I see strange magic flowing from the mind;
No more disease or sorrow of the dust,
But nature comprehensible and kind;
I see new cities rising in new lands,
Kings become diligent and just,
Man by the labors of his hands
Free as the air; I see weird navies riding
Higher than the eagle sweeps,
And with Leviathan deep-hiding
Man in a shell of safety creeps;
His voice surrounds him; in the sky he hears,
And answers from the mountain peaks;
At last the universe hath ears,
The mind unhindered speaks.
Harmless at last, the sword,
Man's sternest ignorance, is laid away.

Grant me in heaven a place—yea, grant us, Lord,
On earth a clear remembrance in that day.

(Exit)

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A pageant of the thirteenth

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